

SBA Helps IT Contractor Download a Plan for Success

Demetrica Berry, known by her friends as Deme, founded Berry Technology Solutions in 2005. BTS is a Georgia [women owned small business](#) that specializes in enterprise IT data solutions.

After more than a decade of working as a traveling senior IT consultant with one of the largest firms in the world, Deme wanted a job that was just as rewarding, but allowed her to spend more time with her family. Frustrated by not being able to find the work-life balance she wanted in her current role, she decided to make the “perfect job.” After much prayer and encouragement, I knew I could do the work I loved and still be able to enjoy my family,” Deme triumphantly exclaims.

Stepping out on faith, she founded the company while sitting at her kitchen table in the southern Atlanta suburb of Newnan. What started as an idea, borne out of frustration, has grown from a one-person, at-home operation into a corporation that employs 38 full-time employees and 10 independent contractors, nationwide.

After filing all of the business registration and certification paperwork, her first step was visiting the SBA website. There she was able to learn about the programs SBA offered, register for numerous training sessions, and contact the [Georgia District Office](#) staff. “I was amazed when I went to the website, I couldn’t believe it. All of the information that I needed was there. All I had to do was just follow the instructions,” she recalls.

And “follow “she did. Deme quickly enrolled in the [HUBZone](#), and [8\(a\) Programs](#) as well as participating in numerous classes and training sessions provided by the SBA and SBDC. BTS was later certified as an 8(a) company and WOSB, helping it to win its first of many federal contracts. The contract, with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, called for BTS to design and manage software that integrates the entire publicly-funded vaccine supply chain between manufacturers, healthcare providers, users and a centralized distributor. This system manages over \$4 billion of vaccine purchases annually and significantly improves vaccine supply chain operations.

Even though her company was growing, Deme did not sit idly by. She continued using SBA services, culminating with an invitation to participate in the SBA [Emerging Leaders Program](#) in Atlanta. The seven-month, intensive training program taught her how to evaluate every aspect of her business and use that information to create a three-year strategic growth action plan. BTS has experienced tremendous success, growing from first year revenues of nearly \$80 thousand to this year’s projected revenue of more than \$34 million.

“Without the SBA my company would not be nearly as successful,” she says without hesitation. “The people I worked with at the SBA took the time to make sure I was successful. They would not only tell me things I should do or think about it, they would also sit down right beside me and show me how to do it.”

Deme offers advice to anyone looking to start or grow their business.” Develop a connection with someone at the SBA, make them your go-to person and stay in touch.” I talk to my counselor regularly. As your company grows, your SBA network can connect you with the resources and programs that meet your needs at each stage, but you have to do your part and stay in touch.”

